

BUSH CONTINUES TO OPPOSE EFFORTS TO PROVIDE COVERAGE FOR THE UNINSURED

(Mr. CARNAHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, this is National Cover the Uninsured Week. This recognition is particularly important this year as our economy continues to dip into recession. The Kaiser Family Foundation recently released a study that shows each time the unemployment rate increases by one percentage point, an additional 600,000 children lose their insurance.

Congress has worked hard to ensure that our children have access to health care coverage through the CHIP program. In strong bipartisan votes, this Congress has repeatedly sent President Bush legislation that would provide 10 million children quality health care coverage, but repeatedly, he vetoed the legislation and prevented us from reaching more children.

This legislation is even more important today as more Americans are losing their jobs and their health care, and yet President Bush and most Republicans in this Chamber refuse to ensure that 10 million children have access to quality health care.

Mr. Speaker, as we recognize the uninsured this week, I once again urge President Bush to reconsider his veto of the CHIP bill.

REAUTHORIZE THE COUNTY PAYMENTS PROGRAM

(Mr. WALDEN of Oregon asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, this Congress continues to break the Federal Government's promise to America's timbered counties, including Klamath County in southern Oregon, by not reauthorizing the county payments program. Klamath County usually receives upwards of \$19 million annually from county payments. The lapse of this program obviously has created a major budget shortfall for that rural county. It's been forced to deplete its operational reserves. It's cut over 10 jobs in areas like the sheriff's office, juvenile justice, administration, and planning.

If revenues fail to meet projections and with the operational reserves depleted, the next rounds of cuts could easily result in more than 25 people in the sheriff's department alone losing their jobs. Klamath County is known for running a tight ship so each new cut carries serious consequences to public services.

Since January of this year, the Democrat majority in this House has sat on H.R. 3058, a bipartisan 4-year reauthorization bill for county payments. Nothing's happened. No vote.

I, again, call on the Democratic leadership: Do the right thing. Keep the

commitment to the timbered communities of this country and pass the reauthorization or put it in the farm bill or put it in the supplemental. Don't strip it out. Restore faith with rural counties all across America. Keep the Federal commitment to these timbered counties.

SOARING PRICES, SILENCE AND SECRECY

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, the President announced that he's open to ideas to lower soaring gasoline prices. That's good news because I noticed gasoline prices began to rise not long after Vice President CHENEY held secret meetings with the energy companies. So the first thing the President ought to do is have the Vice President release the transcripts from those secret meetings. The American people still don't know what the Vice President's energy cabal cooked up. The gasoline prices have skyrocketed ever since.

The President's solution is to allow his oil pals to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. That keeps us addicted to oil, risks environmental catastrophe but feeds the profits of oil companies. Two of the oil companies, BP and Shell, reported almost \$19 billion in profits from the first quarter, and their surrogates in the White House can only meet soaring gas prices with silence and secrecy.

The President claimed he's looking for new ideas. How about an old reliable one: open government. Tell the people what happened in those secret meetings. Maybe then we will find out why I paid \$3.75 for a gallon of gas last night. It was \$1.90 when the President came in.

RECORD HIGH GAS PRICES REQUIRE ACTION, NOT BLAME

(Mr. SIRES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, skyrocketing gas prices continue to squeeze Americans who are now paying more than double the price for gasoline than they did when President Bush first took office. Families and businesses are paying a heavy price for the Bush administration's failure to enact a comprehensive energy plan.

In December, the Democratic Congress passed a historic Energy Independence and Security Act which is expected to lower gas prices for the average family anywhere between \$700 and \$1,000 a year. In addition to this landmark legislation, the Democratic Congress has passed six other bills that put us on a path towards energy independence and crack down on price gouging. However, President Bush and his Republican allies in Congress strongly opposed every single one of these bills.

Mr. Speaker, for years, the President promised to end the addiction to foreign oil, but this administration's energy policies favor massive subsidies for the oil industry. As gas prices hit record highs, President Bush should reconsider his opposition to these bills.

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MORTGAGE CRISIS

(Mr. CARSON of Indiana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to an issue of great concern to the people of my district. When I was home in Indianapolis this weekend I heard from countless homeowners who are concerned about losing their homes and the mortgage crisis. These are good, hardworking people, not speculators or investors, who find themselves on the brink of foreclosure. And the Hoosiers I met aren't alone. Some estimate that nearly 50,000 homes in Indiana will be lost to this crisis if we fail to act.

Indiana families are counting on Congress, and we are taking action. I am proud to serve on the Financial Services Committee, where we are continuing to work on a plan that will provide real relief to homeowners who are struggling. Our plan will help ease the mortgage crisis and help more homeowners stay in their homes.

And I am proud that the legislation includes an amendment I have offered to ensure organizations that serve minority communities have the resources they need to counsel and support homeowners in trouble. Many of these communities have been hit especially hard by this crisis, and it's essential that organizations who serve these neighborhoods can step in and help prevent more foreclosures.

Mr. Speaker, the economic downturn is taking its toll on families in Indianapolis, and we know we can't get our economy back on track unless we address the housing crisis. It is my sincere hope that Members on both sides of the aisle and the President will work together to ensure homeowners stay in their homes and end this crisis.

I-376 TECHNICAL CORRECTION

(Mr. ALTMIRE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, today the House will complete work on the technical corrections bill for the Federal Highway Transportation Act. This bill includes a project that is critical to my district, the future I-376 corridor.

Pittsburgh International Airport is the only major airport not currently on a Federal interstate. This has hurt the region's ability to compete and limited business development along the highways that lead to it. The redesignation of Pennsylvania Routes 22, 30